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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 16 December 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. PENNANEACH (Vice-President)	(Togo)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI (President)	(Saudi Arabia)

- Commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: draft resolution
- The situation in the Middle East: draft resolutions
- Tribute to Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98 (a)

COMMEMORATION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.48)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting, will observe the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it draft resolution A/46/L.48.

(spoke in English)

We celebrate today the twenty-fifth anniversary of one of the notable achievements of the United Nations in the field of human rights - the adoption by the General Assembly in 1966 of the International Covenant on Human Rights. That achievement was the culmination of more than two decades of painstaking efforts within the United Nations by delegations as well as by individuals of good will from all over the world to promote greater respect for human rights.

The founders of the United Nations foresaw that it would not be possible to maintain peace without giving due and basic recognition to human rights. That is why they included numerous references to human rights in the Charter, including those in the Preamble and in Article 1 which reaffirm the importance of such rights and make the promotion of their observance one of the central purposes of the United Nations.

(The President)

The adoption of the Covenants lent further substance to those provisions of the Charter and provided the Organization with invaluable instruments for the achievement of concrete advances in the realization of human rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to it, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, were adopted unanimously by the General Assembly on 16 December 1966.

(The President)

One of the most important provisions of both Covenants is the right of peoples to self-determination, which today still remains to be universally realized in spite of the strenuous efforts by the United Nations to promote its implementation around the world in the 25 years since the adoption of the Covenants.

Let us resolve on this auspicious occasion to make every effort to uphold the noble principles and high standards enshrined in the Covenants, and let us pledge to do all that is within our power to ensure that their provisions are effectively implemented both now and in the years that lie ahead.

I now call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Today we commemorate the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly 25 years ago of the International Covenants on Human Rights. Together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenants have provided the international community with the international bill of human rights. At this commemoration, we are also reaffirming the vitally important principle that lies at the heart of these instruments - namely, that respect for the inalienable rights of all members of the human family and for their inherent dignity is the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world. At the same time, we reaffirm our commitment to broader and more effective global implementation of human rights norms.

The codification of human rights standards is a monumental achievement of the United Nations. Inspired by the founders of the Organization, who recognized the inextricable link between human rights and peace, we have provided, through the Covenants, the fundamental legal framework for just and peaceful societies and a just and peaceful world.

(The Secretary-General)

The Covenants constitute legally binding human rights instruments of global scope and establish standards to which all States should conform. Viewed as an indivisible and interdependent whole, they encompass the broad spectrum of fundamental rights and freedoms, including civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

Over the course of the past 25 years, the International Covenants on Human Rights have provided a solid foundation for the development of a variety of other international human rights instruments, including those relating to the fight against torture and the promotion of the rights of women, of children and of migrant workers and their families, as well as the fight against racial discrimination and apartheid. These instruments, each representing an important advance in the realization of human dignity, rely ultimately upon the concept of universal and fundamental human rights as proclaimed and defined by the Universal Declaration and the Covenants.

To ensure a sustained and active approach in monitoring the implementation of their provisions, the Covenants establish international supervisory mechanisms. These mechanisms - the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - have been playing a crucial role in the promotion and protection of human rights. As a result, States parties regularly review their legislation and their policies and programmes affecting the enjoyment of human rights, and often improve the situation of human rights at the local level. The valuable expertise and jurisprudence developed by the two Committees in the area of human rights implementation has become one of the pillars of the United Nations human rights programme. The specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations

(The Secretary-General)

have contributed very significantly to the positive evolution of the treaty body system and deserve special appreciation for their interest and support.

As we take stock of the past and look to the future, we cannot but feel a sense of dismay at the tragic realities of the world in which we live, where the tyranny of power, poverty and discrimination too often brutalizes human beings. Clearly, in such a world the protection of the weak and the vulnerable requires that the implementation of our human rights instruments assume a quality of moral urgency.

On this commemorative occasion, I therefore strongly appeal to Member States to ratify and fully implement the Covenants and Optional Protocols that have been adopted by this Organization. I appeal now, in the awareness that a new consciousness of human rights is beginning to pervade the globe. This consciousness requires that the inspiration that went into the writing of our bill of rights be rewarded by a genuine improvement in respect for and observance of it.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I now call on Mr. Kofi Nyidevu Awoonor of Ghana, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana): Twenty-five years ago, the international community embarked on a crusade aimed at redressing the ills of our societies through the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

That action, the first ever to codify into international law the general principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, set in motion a number of activities designed purposely for the recognition of man's inherent rights. If we meet today in auspicious circumstances, it is because of our recognition that positive developments have taken place worldwide in pursuit of that course embarked upon by the international community 25 years ago. During this commemoration, therefore, we must endeavour to take stock of what has been achieved in the past 25 years and to exchange ideas on what need to be done in the years ahead in our continuing search for better lives for our peoples.

Since the adoption of the two Covenants, the international community has successfully defined a catalogue of human rights, designed noble goals and managed to set standards for international action and behaviour in the human rights field. In many parts of the world today, we witness movements towards easing tension, identifying priorities and laying foundations for the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights. These movements must be given a boost at the world conference to be convened in 1993 in Berlin.

The Berlin conference is expected to review general compliance with human rights standards and examine ways and means of protecting and promoting human rights still further. It will also consider ways of enhancing the existing United Nations mechanisms and strengthening regional and national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights. We welcome this conference and attach great importance to it. We hope that all United Nations organs and Member States will continue to participate fully and actively in the preparatory work for it.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

While we acknowledge and support the world conference, we reiterate the need for the conference to recognize that any advance towards the pursuit of civil and political rights should have a corresponding drive towards enhancing and guaranteeing the rights to economic and social development. Equating human rights with civil and political liberties alone and ignoring the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights will amount to ignoring the social foundations of all human rights. Peace and stability, at both the national and the international levels, require a fair balance of all the elements that compose human rights. It is for this reason that preparations at the regional level are crucial to the success of the conference. In the course of these preparations, all facets of the entire question of human rights must be placed in clear focus.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

As we commemorate this anniversary of the adoption of the Covenants, therefore, we need to reiterate our belief - self-evident but confirmed by our checkered experiences - that human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed and elaborated in the various international legal instruments, will be meaningless and remain elusive if the majority of the world's humanity continues to languish in poverty.

Today, the global poverty curtain has risen higher, sealing off vast portions of our globe in the darkness of misery and human degradation. Vast areas of the world remain racked by disease, illiteracy and hunger. These areas, largely limited to the former colonial territories and the once cruelly exploited portion of the new world, remain stagnated and arrested in a horrendous time-frame of dismal existence, while the rich parts of the world whirl through scientific and technological advances, with enough money left to experiment with new space weapons and dreams of galactic colonies on the Stars. If the present drive towards the full enjoyment of human rights is to be particularly meaningful, we must define an alternative to our current reality, in which millions of women and children die needless deaths and where populations are reduced to crawling human skeletons due to sheer hunger. In our view, the new world order must be constructed on ardent leaps of faith in man and the will that those who have - and have it in abundance - shall, in redeeming their own humanity, guarantee that these zones of human misery be alleviated through the injection of a massive dose of compassion and monetary relief. The moral imperative that fundamental human rights must be accorded to all citizens of the world should be the same force that propels us to recognize that poverty is an abhorrent assault on each one's basic right to life itself.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

Human rights should also be predicated on the recognition of equality at the individual, national and international level. To promote human rights, let us also pay attention to the actions in the international economic arena that will give each nation the capacity to respect human rights. The various disabilities from which developing countries suffer include the debt burden, a punitive market that takes away money from the poor and imposes a load of conditionalities that accompany assistance, even though there exists no complementary gesture from the global economic system in support of their efforts. The international community should address these issues in its collective efforts to promote human rights the world over, in poor and rich nations alike, whether in the advanced nations where acts of brutality are frequently organized against minorities and immigrants, or in developing countries where all manner of persecution exists against ethnic or dissenting minorities.

As we commemorate this twenty-fifth anniversary, therefore, we must recognize that in spite of our tremendous achievements in the field of human rights, the international community is still confronted with the great task of the promotion of those concepts. The United Nations and we Member States must, therefore, pledge to continue the search for the formula which will enhance our joint and individual efforts in the mutually reinforcing fields of human rights, development, peace and the attainment of the dignity of the human person without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion and in due recognition of the self-evident truth of the equality of all men and all States.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I call on Mr. Mohammad Abulhasan, the permanent representative of Kuwait, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a great honour and pleasure for me to speak on behalf of the Asian Group of States in the United Nations on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights. This is a sacred occasion which assumes new importance with the increasing interest in the world, at both the official and popular levels, in man and his natural rights.

The seeds of human rights were planted in 1945 when they were set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, which states as one of its objectives:

"to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women ..."

Twenty years later, on 16 December 1966, the General Assembly approved the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights, thus guaranteeing a wider basis for its noble objectives. Undoubtedly, the commemoration of this twenty-fifth anniversary deserves celebration here at United Nations Headquarters and in all Member States.

Despite some shortcomings and violations, genuine progress has been achieved in the field of human rights. It is now agreed that an awareness, and indeed a cultural movement, have been created for human rights in most States of the world. We must all be grateful to the United Nations for its effectiveness in monitoring and assessing the implementation of the principles of human rights.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Furthermore, dedicated non-governmental organizations and faithful individuals have played a laudable role in encouraging this cultural movement on human rights. It is difficult to overestimate the value of their efforts to which many individuals in the world owe their freedom, and indeed their lives.

In addition to the United Nations and non-governmental organizations contributions, the media's role has been crucial in combating abuses and barbarity. Such concerted efforts make it difficult for any Government to ignore the need to protect human rights. It is not easy to say that the random use of force against civilians has ended. Unfortunately, people in many parts of the world remain deprived of their rights and the use of force has not yet become the exception to the rule. Therefore, we must work to ensure commitment to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in a more disciplined manner.

On this occasion, the Group of Asian States wishes to express its satisfaction with the United Nations role in encouraging the protection of human rights wherever and whenever such rights are put at risk.

In an era when there is a renewal of trust in the Organization, just as was the case in 1945 when the Charter was signed, respect for human rights has become a key element in the search for international peace. We are convinced that the violation of human rights and the maltreatment of civilian populations endanger peace and security. In order to maintain peace and security it is fitting for the United Nations to continue to legislate in the field of international declarations of rights. Naturally, there may be conflict between national sovereignty and the interpretation of the instruments of human rights.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Obstacles no doubt exist. However, the time is not far when peace, security, the respect of human rights and national sovereignty will not be seen as contradictory. Indeed, they will be seen as fundamental elements of law and therefore elements that promote one another.

Our celebration today deserves a warm welcome from us. The Asian group of States wishes to add its voice to other groups in support of the efforts being made to ensure respect of this international declaration.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I now call on the Permanent Representative of Mexico, Mr. Jorge Montaño, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, I wish to say how pleased we are at the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols - instruments that complement the San Francisco Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This is an excellent occasion for us to review the overall picture of human rights, which is one of contrasts. While we have been witness to the culmination of a stage of the colonial era and the accession to independence of many States, which have increased the membership of the United Nations, and while we have seen the flourishing of democratic regimes, we need to be aware that inequality on the basis of race, nationality or sex has not been eradicated, nor has the system of apartheid and the colonial domination over some peoples and territories. The progress achieved thus far should encourage members to continue their efforts to deal with the situations that have yet to

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

be resolved and new cases that arise, without distinction on the basis of geography or level of development.

The countries of our region believe that the enforcement of economic, social and cultural rights is indivisible and interdependent in nature, and should be viewed overall, together with the full enjoyment of civil and political rights. It has been discouraging for us to see that progress towards peace has not found a counterpart in the sphere of international economic relations and that the profound economic crisis in the region is impeding the efforts towards modernization and democratization made by many of our societies. This is a real threat to political stability and therefore to full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Covenants have inspired the development of new international instruments, as can be seen in the different conventions, inter alia, on the rights of the child, of migrant workers and their families and of women, and they have also inspired such new subjects as the right to development. In this way, the international community has viewed human rights as an integrated set of conditions without which a life in dignity of the individual in society and of societies in the international community is not possible. Therein resides the importance of the International Covenants on Human Rights, and we should apply them in their full scope.

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, to which Latin America and the Caribbean attach the utmost importance, will enable us to assess the progress made since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to identify the impediments to further progress and ways to overcome them. It will provide an opportunity to review the mechanisms that have thus far been the cornerstone in the defence of fundamental freedoms, including the

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

International Covenants on Human Rights, and to make recommendations for conditions that would enable all the peoples of the world to enjoy these rights.

In view of the inequalities and injustices affecting the human rights regime, it is essential to base our work on the doctrine of international law. In so far as there is greater consistency between the implementation of international instruments and the efficiency of the organs entrusted with administering them, the United Nations will be able to strengthen and perfect the system for the protection of human rights.

In this regard, greater confidence in the Organization's system of defining and protecting human rights presupposes greater support for the International Covenants in this field. While the current state of signing and ratification of the Covenants is encouraging, it is clear that over the course of time and out of their own conviction, a larger number of States should accede to these Covenants. It is, however, particularly discouraging to see that countries that participated actively in the development of the Covenants are not parties to them and, furthermore, that they claim to be guardians of the observance of these Covenants in third countries.

It is clear that the system for the protection of human rights inspires and guides the international community's actions in search of change. Let us take advantage of this unifying element that gathers together those who are struggling for a more democratic society and for just economic, social, civil and political reforms for the benefit of mankind. Resolute support by the international community for the International Covenants on Human Rights will no doubt be decisive in enlarging and strengthening the framework in which the rights that have been proclaimed can be exercised as a shared ideal.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

The current situation of international relations provides an excellent opportunity for us to ensure broader observance of human rights. In this regard, we must continue to fight to ensure that the principles of humanitarian law and the genuine aspiration to help create conditions conducive to respect for, and the full exercise of, political and civil rights, and of economic, social and cultural rights may prevail over any other consideration or interest.

Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): In the calendar of commemorative dates this year the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights occupies an important place. For all those who cherish the ideals of equality, justice and democracy, those historic documents are of particular value.

This is especially evident now, when, in the sphere of international activity, confrontation is being replaced by genuine cooperation and when the outmoded myths and stereotypes of the cold-war era are collapsing, one after another. Today, dialogue and the search for mutually acceptable solutions aimed primarily at establishing the most favourable conditions for human life and activity are what the international community is consciously concentrating on.

The nature of the recent development of cooperation between States enables us to take an optimistic view of the future. We are convinced that the international community now has a solid foundation on which common endeavours in this area can be successfully built, and that foundation is provided by the International Covenants on Human Rights. Those documents hold the enormous potential of the universal human values which serve to unite all States and peoples regardless of their social, economic or political structures. Is precisely now, when international cooperation on human rights is rising to a radically new level, that it becomes far more important to universalize the standards enshrined in those international documents and make them applicable everywhere.

The International Covenants on Human Rights are essentially the normative embodiment of those values which reflect the centuries-long experience of the development of world civilization as a whole. They are the recognition of the

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

binding nature of universally accepted moral norms. It is, of course, a fact that there are different approaches to the concept of human rights and different interpretations of the norms enshrined in the International Covenants and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each country draws on its own historical experience and on the specific sum of its own humanitarian and cultural ideas. That fact, however, by no means rules out but, on the contrary, presupposes the need for active dialogue, constructive discussion, the search for truth and, lastly, the exchange of positive experience for the appropriate and universal application of norms in ensuring human rights.

The significance of this area in guaranteeing a peaceful life for the world's peoples is beyond doubt. Commitment to the Covenants and accession to them by all countries are key factors for the dynamic development of international cooperation in the field of human rights. By its very nature, that field requires a universal structure in order to safeguard the rights of the individual. That is why one of the major tasks of the international community is to promote the accession of as many States as possible to the International Covenants and to other documents of the greatest importance in the field of human rights. That would, in a major and objective way, promote the attainment of the necessary level of implementation of international standards and the establishment and strengthening of guarantees for each person's exercise of his inalienable rights.

It is clear that enhancing the authority and effectiveness of the Covenants does not lie solely in a quantitative increase of the number of States parties to them: the system of commitments cannot operate effectively without mutual confidence on the part of States that those commitments will be

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

strictly and fully implemented. Strengthening openness and trust in the field of human rights and enhancing the activity of the control bodies established on the basis of the Covenants must play an important role in giving mankind a life of dignity. In the final analysis, that promotes the democratization and humanization of the entire system of international relations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I now call on the representative of the Netherlands, who will speak on behalf of the States members of the European Community.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): On behalf of the European Community and its twelve member States, we wish to join all States Members of the United Nations in celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the two International Covenants on Human Rights.

Twenty-five years ago, on 16 December 1966, the States Members of the United Nations adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They recognized that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom, freedom from fear and want, can be achieved only if we create conditions under which everyone may enjoy his or her civil and political rights, as well as his or her economic, social and cultural rights.

With the adoption of the Covenants, the process towards establishing an international bill of human rights, which bore its first fruit in 1948 with the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, finally came to its conclusion. That was a historic event, which embodied in binding international instruments the obligations of States to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

The newly adopted Covenants also established supervisory mechanisms to monitor their implementation. Furthermore, the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights established a complaints procedure for individuals claiming to be victims of violations of rights set forth in the Covenant. Thus, the idea of the accountability of Governments for their compliance with international obligations in the field of human rights became a reality instead of merely an abstract ideal. There is no justification for Governments to argue that criticism for their failure to implement international human-rights obligations constitutes interference in their internal affairs.

In the years which have elapsed since the adoption of the Covenants, much has happened. Non-governmental organizations have played an active and catalytic role in this respect. We welcome the fact that a large number of States have become parties to the Covenants and that some are in the process of doing so. Today in particular, we call on all States which have not already done so to ratify, or to accede to, those instruments.

In the past 25 years, new initiatives have been taken to perfect the system which was adopted in 1966. In 1985, for instance, the sessional working group of the Economic and Social Council was transformed into the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Thus, supervision of the implementation of that Covenant was placed at the same level as supervision of the implementation of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was an important step forward in giving equal status to the two categories of human rights.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

With respect to new standard-setting since the adoption of the two Covenants, we should like to single out the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (General Assembly resolution 44/128), as it was a concrete addition to the Covenant itself.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

It was adopted in 1989 and entered into force this year. This constituted a major step forward in the field of human rights. We therefore encourage those States that are able to do so to become parties to the Second Optional Protocol. States that have not formally abolished the death penalty should consider refraining from implementing this severest form of penal sanction.

Over the years, the Supervisory Committees of the Covenants have developed into well-respected authoritative bodies that scrutinize reports by States parties on the implementation of the Covenants and make general comments on specific articles, which is a very useful practice.

Nevertheless, the system that was established is not flawless. Some countries had great difficulty in presenting reports on time or presented inadequate reports. The burden on many States grew through the expansion and overlapping of reporting obligations, due to the adoption of new human-rights instruments. Insufficient resources prevented the treaty bodies from functioning effectively. And, last but not least, the Secretariat, for reasons of insufficient staffing, was unable to provide the treaty bodies with the administrative and technical support they required. That is the reason for our concern that proliferation of new standards has to be avoided or limited to those situations where the need to draft new instruments is commanded by a broad consensus of the international community.

The General Assembly reaffirmed last year that it is responsible for the proper functioning of the human rights treaty bodies. It also reaffirmed in this connection the importance of ensuring the effective functioning of systems of periodic reporting by States parties to the human-rights instruments and the importance of securing sufficient financial resources. The European Community and its member States remain firmly committed to furthering this goal.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

Since 1966 we have witnessed significant political changes in the world. The ideological battles that played a dominant role at the time of the adoption of the Covenants have now virtually disappeared. This makes it all the more possible to approach with an open mind the issue of the relationship between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. The new political climate also allows for cooperation geared to paying more attention to the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.

Another positive development is the trend towards democratization in all regions of the world. We welcome the growing recognition in the international development debate of the vital relationship between democracy, human rights and development. Respect for human rights, the rule of law, and political institutions that are effective, accountable and enjoy democratic legitimacy constitutes in our view an indispensable prerequisite for dynamic economic development and the equitable distribution of resources.

Let me conclude this statement by looking to the future. The European Community and its member States are confident that the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in 1993 in Berlin - symbol of the triumph of people in a peaceful struggle for human rights and democracy - will give a boost to universal respect for human rights. We attach great importance to this Conference, which, among other things, will review and assess the progress that has been made in the field of human rights. It will also examine ways and means of protecting and promoting human rights still further, including enhancement of the existing mechanisms of the United Nations and strengthening of regional and national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights. We express the hope that this Conference will be a milestone in the history of the United Nations, as the adoption of the Covenants was back in 1966.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I now call on Mr. Nouhad Mahmoud of Lebanon, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which Lebanon has the honour of chairing for this month, on this solemn occasion, the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on human rights, be they social, economic, cultural, civil or political rights.

Since the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, resolution 217 (III), this noble objective has become a common ideal of the international community. The right of peoples to self-determination and to struggle against occupation, apartheid, racism and all forms of racial discrimination has become the subject of multilateral legal international instruments in the form of conventions, declarations or codes of conduct that have all entered into effect.

Since the adoption of resolution 1514 (XV) on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, the right to self-determination and the right of peoples to decide their own future freely have become two basic conditions for the enjoyment of basic freedoms and human rights. It is of great importance that serious steps are being taken to reaffirm the concept of international protection of human rights and to give a new dimension to international cooperation in order to increase awareness of and respect for human rights and thus ensure that peoples enjoy their cultural, political, economic and social rights.

The States Members have committed themselves to the implementation of and respect for the noble objectives contained in these Covenants as an expression

(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

of their faith that these objectives are the minimum necessary to ensure the dignity of citizens in their countries. The beautiful words we have heard, the noble objectives and the lofty goals embodied in our observance of this anniversary today must encompass all people on the face of the earth, wherever or whoever they may be, without any distinction as to race, religion or creed. They cover freedom of thought and freedom of expression and embody the principles of justice, equality and self-determination.

Unfortunately, when we look around us, despite the fact that twenty-five years have passed since the adoption of these two Covenants, we find that we have not yet been able to put an end to the grave violations of human rights in various parts of the world. There continue to be some racist regimes in the world that ignore those rights and trample them under foot in complete disregard of their legal and international commitments. Casting a glance at what is happening in South Africa or in occupied Palestine makes it clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the occupying authorities there continue to ignore and disregard the most rudimentary principles of democracy, justice, freedom and equality, and continue to deny the right of self-determination of peoples stipulated in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

Proceeding from this, we believe that any violation or disregard of these Covenants by the regimes of South Africa and Israel constitutes a defiance to mankind as a whole. That cannot be tolerated. The continued military occupation of Arab territories constitutes an obstacle in the face of the right to self-determination and is a violation of human rights, foremost of which is the right to freedom. Freedom is the secret of human creativity, without which no human being can enjoy the rights of every human being. Therefore, it has become necessary, more than ever, for the international community to discharge its responsibility and to put an end to occupation and inhuman practices, in addition to forcing Israel to put an end to its settlement policies. In particular the various condemnations adopted by different international bodies are no longer sufficient to face up to such practices.

On this occasion, we call upon the international community to do its utmost to force Israel and South Africa to strictly abide by the provisions of the international covenants on human rights and without any further delay, in order to ensure peace and security and respect for the provisions of the United Nations Charter. These provisions aim basically at protecting mankind from the scourge of war, displacement and oppression.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of our countries to the Covenants and principles which ensure respect for human rights and basic freedoms, without distinction as to sex, race or religion. Our countries reaffirm their intention to spare no effort, in cooperating with other countries and peoples, in order to implement these Covenants and conventions in accordance with the international arrangements for monitoring their implementation. The achievements of these noble common objectives of mankind

(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

cannot come about without the awareness of the international community and the keen interest of all peoples on earth in the protection of human rights and the translation of the principles of the international Covenants into reality so that all peoples of the world may enjoy security, peace and natural respect for human rights.

Mr. HUSLID (Norway): On this solemn occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Covenants on Human Rights, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway.

History has proved that the objectives of peace, security and development require respect for human rights and the rule of law. This calls for universality and collective action.

By accepting the United Nations Charter, States also accept that human rights violations are a legitimate concern of the United Nations - indeed, a necessary one if the Organization is to fulfil its purposes and preserve its credibility.

This concern must be universal and even-handed. It must extend equally to all violations, wherever they occur and under whatever political, social or religious system. In other words, efforts by the United Nations to protect and promote human rights do not constitute interference in the internal affairs of States.

Today - 25 years since the Covenants were first adopted - more than 60 States Members of the United Nations are still not parties to those instruments. Only a minority of the Member States have acceded to the Optional Protocols to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Once again

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

we urge all States which have not yet become parties to those instruments to reconsider their position and to take appropriate measures to remove any remaining obstacles to ratification or accession.

United Nations action in the field of human rights has yielded considerable results. The Covenants have broadened, strengthened and deepened the commitments of States parties. Still, the action of the Covenant bodies - as they themselves are only too aware - could become more effective. All in all there is an urgent need to strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery by increasing the level of resources available.

The Nordic countries believe that efforts must now be concentrated on ensuring universal adherence to and scrupulous implementation of the provisions of the Covenants. This issue should also be addressed as the main objective of the World Conference on Human Rights.

The recent achievements of popular and democratic movements in a number of countries which had ratified the Covenants long ago have demonstrated that ratification does not in itself amount to implementation. The implementation of the fundamental principles of human rights as codified in the Covenants is the responsibility of all States and must, I repeat, be a main priority of the 1990s.

As we rejoice in the triumph of the ideals of human rights over many systems that are guilty of massive and systematic violations of human rights, we must, however, at the same time, be aware of the fact that hatred, aggression, intolerance and social and economic injustices remain fertile ground for human rights violations.

An anniversary commemorating the International Covenants on Human Rights should not be observed without paying due homage to the defenders of human

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

rights, including non-governmental organizations and their crucial contributions to the lofty cause served by the Covenants: the cause of human dignity. Were it not for the unselfish dedication of non-governmental organizations and other defenders of human rights, there would no doubt be much less progress to celebrate. We honour those defenders of human rights who have paid the highest price - their lives - for this noble cause. Our thoughts and our solidarity are with those who at this very moment languish in detention or are otherwise deprived of exercising their fundamental rights.

Finally, the Nordic countries would like to express their hope that the draft declaration (A/46/L.48) we have presented on this occasion can be adopted by the General Assembly by acclamation. In our view, this step would constitute an appropriate confirmation by the world community of the universal commitment to protect and promote the human rights embodied in the Covenants as a common heritage of mankind.

Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The elaboration of an international bill of human rights - that is to say, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the two international human-rights covenants we are celebrating today - represents one of the great achievements of the Organization.

In the wake of the devastation and tragedy of the Second World War the need to promote and protect human rights was very much on the minds of those drafting the Charter of the Organization to save succeeding generations from those same scourges. The United Nations Charter thus ushered in a new era in which social justice and freedom from fear and want were acknowledged to be not just fundamental to the dignity and worth of the human person but also prerequisites for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We pay tribute today to the wisdom, foresight and humanity of those who drafted the two Covenants. As the first comprehensive and binding international treaties in the field of human rights they are milestones in the process of achieving the Charter's objective of the universal enjoyment of human rights. They give concrete meaning to, and establish effective mechanisms for, the implementation of the undertaking in the Charter

> "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women" and "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

Virtually every State has adhered to at least one international human-rights instrument, and nearly two thirds have accepted the comprehensive Covenants we are celebrating today. We have indeed come a long way from the days when slavery, the divine right of kings or the inferiority of women, of

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

particular races or of the poor were considered to be part of "natural law". The very fact that all Member States acknowledge that discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or religion is not acceptable, that we all reject torture, that the will of the people is regarded as providing the legitimacy of governments, demonstrates the impact of the international standards contained in the Covenants.

On this occasion we must also pay a tribute to all those who have worked tirelessly since the adoption of these two instruments to try to turn the legal commitments into everyday realities. We include here the independent experts whom Member States have entrusted with the task of monitoring compliance with the two Covenants. The impact of their review of national law and practices cannot be understated. Our three countries know this from our own experience in providing regular reports and engaging in the consequent discussions with the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The individual-complaints mechanism in the First Optional Protocol to the Covenent on Civil and Political Rights provides additional protection for citizens of our countries. Australia has recently joined Canada and New Zealand in becoming a party to the Optional Protocol.

Like the Nordic countries, our three countries believe it is particularly appropriate that the work of the non-governmental organizations also be acknowledged on this occasion. They play a vital role in assisting and providing the information to the monitoring bodies and Governments in the reporting process.

This is an occasion to look forward and consider ways in which collective efforts could further enhance implementation of the two Covenants. This remains one of the principal challenges of contemporary international affairs.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

As the Secretary-General said in his annual report to the Assembly three months ago - the last of his illustrious mandate - there is now a heightened interest in achieving a universal régime of human rights, a greater awareness that this is one of the key foundations of abiding peace. The two Covenants provide a solid basis on which to proceed. The legislative process is largely over. The challenge is to turn the standards in the Covenants into a reality for all.

Our three countries look forward to the day when all States Members of the Organization will be party to these two instruments. We hope that the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 will provide momentum for the universal accession to these two basic human-rights instruments and that States will try to complete the necessary legal steps to be in a position to accede to these instruments on or before that occasion. We also hope that States will consider acceding to the Optional Protocols.

The effective functioning of the treaty bodies is fundamental to the achievement of the enjoyment of the rights set out in the two Covenants, and this is thus a challenge that the United Nations must continue to address.

There are also still conceptual debates about the implementation of the Covenants. We are all aware of the debate that one set of rights is more important than the other or that the enjoyment of one set of rights is conditional on the enjoyment of the other.

We hope that this occasion, by encouraging us to reflect on the history and intent of these two Covenants, will help us move beyond sterile debate of the past. The two Covenents were elaborated together. They are complementary. The starting point for both is the understanding that:

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

"the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his" - or her - "economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his" - or her - "civil and political rights." (General Assembly resolution 2200 (XXI) A, Annex, Preamble)

These two abiding aspirations are constant and are as truly pertinent today as they were 25 years ago. On the one hand, there is the desire for individual freedom and a democratic order and, on the other, the desire for improved standards of living.

With that understanding, let us move forward together over the next 25 years and beyond to find practical means to realize the achievement of all human rights embodied in these two Covenants. We must move with energy and common commitment on all fronts, protecting and promoting all the rights set out in both Covenants.

Mr. ERDOS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): It is my honour today, on the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the two International Covenants on human rights, to address the General Assembly on behalf of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This occasion affords us an opportunity to reflect on the significance of those Covenants for the community of nations and, in particular, for the countries of Central Europe.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Optional Protocol, were adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1966 under political conditions that were radically different from those that prevail today. Upon their entry into force 10 years later, we could begin to

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

speak of the existence of an international legal basis for human rights, which included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two Covenants. That group of documents served as a basis and a legal framework for a comprehensive system of human-rights instruments that could then be developed further. As a result, today we must not confine ourselves to extolling the merits of the two Covenants, which are necessarily marked by the effects of the difficult compromises of their day, but we should also emphasize the positive influence they have had on subsequent legislation in the human-rights sphere. Thus, for example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights itself has been enriched by a second Optional Protocol on the Abolition of Capital Punishment, which entered into force on 11 July of this year.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

Despite the participation of nearly 100 countries that are parties to the Covenants, the universality of these two instruments seems to us to be still fairly remote. But today, the international community is no longer inclined to tolerate Governments overtly or more covertly opposing the provisions of the Covenants. Such attitudes are not only a violation of major international instruments, but also represent a challenge to the community of nations. We can rightfully say that the Universal Declaration and the International Covenants today represent a code of conduct that includes not only a recognition of the legitimate nature of concern and an international stand in the face of violations of human rights, but also a political and moral obligation to oppose such violations. The United Nations must act so that nothing, no pretext or principle of inter-State relations, can be invoked to justify, conceal or deny violations of the fundamental rights of individuals, communities and peoples.

In certain geopolitical situations, the Covenants can acquire specific aspects and significance. In Central Europe, for example, at the time of their adoption the Covenants were considered almost as forbidden fruit and they had only a rather limited effect on the situation relating to citizens' rights. But eventually, over the years, this state of affairs and the frustration that accompanied it eroded more and more and were replaced by a growing need and ever more committed efforts to work for individual rights and freedoms. It is no exaggeration to say that the true authority and prestige of the Covenants were established by citizens themselves who became aware of their rights and opportunities. For millions of these citizens in Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava or Budapest, initiatives and actions reflecting their shared democratic aspirations and their love of liberty have become ever more frequent and natural.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

The road that led from the first timid steps to the democratic and pacific turning-point and to free elections was not an easy one. We were living in an era in which a simple reference to fundamental rights and freedoms was readily characterized as anti-governmental action, an era of realpolitik, an era when some types of scaffolding still seemed unshakable.

In that context, we cannot pass over in silence the historic merits of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which has turned out to be one of the most effective means for breaking through the glacier in the East, for opening breaches in the ramparts of closed societies of the region and thus for accelerating their collapse. The initiatives of civilian society, the dissident movements independent of power, the famous Helsinki groups were all involved in making today's political landscape in the eastern part of Europe so different. One of the driving forces behind these events was precisely the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which is based in turn on United Nations documents relative to human rights, including the International Covenants.

One of the most important messages of the changes that have taken place in Central Europe is that economic, social and cultural rights are difficult to interpret and implement without civil and political rights, and that there can be no genuine viable alternatives for development without the integral participation of the individual and without respect for his human rights and freedom of choice. We are aware that political changes provide only a framework for the full exercise of economic, social and cultural rights. But the existence of democratic machinery in a State of law offers us the possibility to overcome economic difficulties in order better to fight against social injustice and the manifestations of intolerance that have traditionally accompanied it.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

The other message that was confirmed by these events is that it is perfectly possible to ensure, through peaceful means, the victory of the rights contained in the Covenants, including the right to free elections. These cannot be a goal in themselves, for respect for the popular will must also prevail in post-electoral times and organically integrate itself into the daily life of the entire society.

It is the degree to which international instruments are implemented that gives them their genuine importance. In this context, we welcome the activity of the bodies established by the Covenants. The entire set of United Nations control machinery in the area of human rights - a set based on the provisions of the Covenants - is a double-purpose tool that simultaneously sounds a warning and renders assistance. Its sole objective is the re-establishment of the rights of individuals and communities. For this machinery to operate in a satisfactory manner, it is indispensable that the positive cooperation of all States and the necessary human and financial resources be ensured. We are confident that the World Conference on Human Rights planned for 1993 in Berlin will make a contribution, inter alia, to completing verification of the implementation of the rights set down in the Covenants.

One of humanity's greatest challenges in the twentieth century has been that of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. After the great upheavals of the end of our century, we seem to be in a better position - more open and less rigid - for completing our great common struggle for the survival of our civilization and the defence of its values.

Mr. KRENKEL (Austria): Today we are commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

(Mr. Krenkel, Austria)

Those intruments, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, form the basis of United Nations activities and efforts to guarantee and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. All human rights and fundamental freedoms, as contained in the International Covenants, are indivisible and interrelated, and the promotion and protection of one category of rights should never exempt or excuse States from the promotion and protection of the other.

The implementation and further development of existing human rights standards require a solid basis, an international legal framework of a universal character. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and their implementation mechanisms constitute such a fundamental basis.

(Mr. Krenkel, Austria)

All States Members of the United Nations should do their utmost to strengthen the universal character and applicability of the Covenants and their Optional Protocols.

Full protection of human rights is essential for the maintenance of peace and security. The Secretary-General, in his Human Rights Day message, stated that

> "heightened consciousness of human rights has created a new international recognition of the need to reconcile the fundamentally important principle of the sovereignty of States with the need to protect and enhance human rights. The world can no longer tolerate massive and systematic violations of human rights and indifference to human suffering. These affronts to humanity must be urgently countered with corrective action, especially where peace is threatened."
>
> (Press release SG/SM/4667)

All States that have not yet done so should become parties to the International Covenants and should consider acceding to the Optional Protocols to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

An important - indeed, essential - role is allocated to the two Committees established under the Covenants: to supervise and support States parties in the full implementation of those instruments. Despite the increasing number of ratifications and accessions to international human rights treaties, as well as the entry into force of new instruments in this field, the effective functioning of treaty bodies established pursuant to United Nations human rights instruments is a pressing problem and should be a continuing concern of the United Nations.

(Mr. Krenkel, Austria)

Existing United Nations procedures and mechanisms have to be further strengthened, and new and innovative approaches are necessary to close the wide gap between aspirations and reality in the field of human rights. Austria will take the initiative and submit a proposal for such a new mechanism to the upcoming session of the Commission on Human Rights.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Covenants on human rights we should evaluate in a frank and honest manner ways and means to ensure that democracy, human rights and development are provided for all without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin or other criteria.

Dramatic changes have taken place in the world. States can no longer deny their citizens the full enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Therefore, expressing concern for human rights situations and protecting persons subject to massive and systematic human rights violations can no longer be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

Much remains to be done to implement even the most fundamental rights and to ensure the proper functioning of the United Nations human rights machinery. All States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights. That obligation should not be seen as a burden, but as a challenge and a duty vis-à-vis their own citizens and the international community. Austria stands ready to contribute its share, together with all other States represented here today, to the establishment of a universal culture of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.48.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt that draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/46/L.48 was adopted (resolution 46/81).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I declare concluded the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

AGENDA ITEM 35 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/46/L.49, L.50 AND L.51)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I remind representatives that the debate on this item was concluded at the 57th plenary meeting, held on 27 November.

In connection with this item the Assembly has before it three draft resolutions, issued as documents A/46/L.49, A/46/L.50 and A/46/L.51.

I call on the representative of Cuba to introduce the three draft resolutions.

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I have the honour, on behalf of the sponsors, of introducing the draft resolutions contained in documents A/46/L.49, A/46/L.50 and A/46/L.51 under agenda item 35, "The situation in the Middle East".

I wish to note that Afghanistan, Malaysia and Cuba should be listed among the sponsors of all three draft resolutions; Bahrain should be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.50; Pakistan and Indonesia should

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.51; Sudan should not appear among the sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.50.

The sponors are of the opinion that the draft resolutions which I have the honour of introducing are of the greatest importance given the present conditions in the Middle East and in the light of the changes in the international situation and the events in the region since the forty-fifth session and of the situation still prevailing in the Middle East today.*

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* Mr. Pennaneach (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

The situation that Israel has created in the area has been the subject of many resolutions - resolutions of the General Assembly and resolutions of the Security Council. Unfortunately, the repeated appeals made to the occupying Power not only to return the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, but also to refrain from any action, such as the establishment of settlements in those territories, that could impede the attainment of a just and lasting peace, have fallen on deaf ears.

During the past two years, on more than one occasion, the Security Council has been called upon to consider violations of the most diverse types committed in the occupied territories by the occupying Power. In spite of the difficulties in its path, the Council has adopted a number of resolutions that clearly demonstrate that Israel continues its policy of violation and ignores the appeals of the international community. In this respect, we cannot fail to mention that the Security Council continues to apply a double standard, on the basis of which it has adopted a broad range of resolutions such as those that impose enforcement measures against certain States - especially when such action has been in the interests of some of the permanent members - but has afforded absolute impunity in respect of the actions of others who, like Israel, are recognized violators of international law.

While it is essential to recall all the norms and principles of law that are violated by the occupying Power, it is of perhaps the most vital importance to underscore that Power's continued violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The Palestinian people, whose legitimate representative is without doubt the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), continues to be subjected to the harshest attacks. We have an unquestionable

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

duty not only to work for its protection but to secure for it the full and unimpeded exercise of its sovereign rights.

The draft resolutions that I have the honour of introducing reaffirm clearly that the question of Palestine is at the very heart of the conflict in the Middle East, but they also clearly establish that peace in that region is indivisible and must be based on an integral, just and lasting solution to the conflict, under the auspices of the United Nations and through measures that ensure Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the Palestinian territories it has occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories, including the Golan Heights, whose annexation by the occupying Power is totally illegal and should be considered null and void and without any legal validity whatsoever.

Furthermore, the texts of the draft resolutions underscore the illegality of Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on Jerusalem. They underscore the fact that this decision is null and void and, therefore, without any validity whatsoever.

In the context of the draft resolutions that the Assembly has before it, we also stress the need for all States to refrain from giving political, economic, financial, military or any other assistance to Israel while the Israeli regime continues its illegal occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories, continues to subject the populations of those territories to acts of terror, and continues practices aimed at perpetuating the occupation of those territories and at consummating their annexation by the State of Israel.

Lastly, the sponsors wish to reiterate the importance of these draft resolutions in the context of events affecting the situation in the Middle

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

East. Whereas, on one hand, efforts are being made to find a negotiated solution to the conflict that has gripped the region for decades, on the other hand, paradoxically, we clearly see that Israel's practices, including its discriminatory practices against the indigenous population of the Palestinian and other Arab territories that it occupies, continue to violate the legitimate rights of the inhabitants of those territories, just as the expansionist policy that it pursues continues to be a threat to its neighbours and, therefore, to the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

This is why, while not failing to take into account the events that have taken place in the region - the draft resolutions include changes that can easily be seen if the drafts are compared with the Assembly's resolutions of last year on this item - we the sponsors, in the texts that I am now introducing, have clearly reflected our positions. These texts reflect the stand taken by the General Assembly and by the Security Council on Israel's policies and practices, which comprise an essential and negative aspect of the situation in the Middle East.

It remains for me only to put these texts before the Assembly and, on behalf of the sponsors, to recommend their adoption as resolutions. I should like, however, to point out that the sponsors do not want the General Assembly to take any action at this stage on the draft resolution contained in document A/46/L.50, but reserve their right to request its adoption at some later point during the current session.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

Mr. AWAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation reaffirms at this stage the request to defer the vote on draft resolution A/46/L.50 of 12 December 1991 and submitted to the General Assembly concerning the occupied Syrian Golan Heights while reserving the right to submit it again during the current forty-sixth session in the light of the results of the peace process.

On the other hand, the Syrian delegation considers that resolution 46/47 F, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1991, satisfies Syria's wish at this time for clear positions of support on the part of Member States regarding the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and the fact that the jurisdiction and laws imposed by Israel on the Golan from 1967 to the present are null and void. In that context, the Syrian delegation would like to express its thanks and deep appreciation to the 152 States which have voted in favour of resolution 46/47 F.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We shall now proceed to consider two draft resolutions.

We shall first hear speakers in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. BAS BACKER (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the twelve member States of the European Community.

Our views on the principles that need to be applied to solve the conflict in the Middle East were set out in full in our statement in this debate on 26 November. The Twelve have serious reservations about draft resolutions A/46/L.49 and A/46/L.50. We hope now that the deferral just requested for the

(Mr. Bas Backer, Netherlands)

vote on draft resolution A/46/L.50 may lead to a resolution acceptable to all of us.

We welcome the substantial improvements in this year's text, draft resolution A/46/L.49, but remain concerned about the lack of balance and about the fact that this draft resolution does not reflect basic principles which we consider essential for a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We are, however, glad to support the third draft resolution under this item, A/46/L.51, and in this regard wish to recall the importance we attach to Security Council resolution 478 (1980).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take action on the two draft resolutions before it.

The Assembly will take a decision first on draft resolution A/46/L.49.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania,

Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Greece, Grenada, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Spain, Togo, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Uruguay

Draft resolution A/46/L.49 was adopted by 93 votes to 27, with 37 abstentions (resolution 46/82 A).*

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): As I indicated before, the General Assembly will defer action on draft resolution A/46/L.50 to a later date.

We turn now to draft resolution A/46/L.51.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of),

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* Subsequently, the delegations of Angola, Cameroon and the Congo advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel

Abstaining: Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, United States of America

Draft resolution A/46/L.51 was adopted by 152 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions (resolution 46/82 B).*

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now call on representatives wishing to explain their vote. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

Mr. WRAMPLEMEIER (United States of America): The two resolutions just adopted deal with important aspects of the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. However, as my Mission has repeatedly explained when this item has come up for decision in previous years, the only realistic means of achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem is through direct negotiations between the parties concerned.

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* Subsequently, the delegations of Angola, Barbados and Cameroon advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

(Mr. Wramplemeier,
United States)

Under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, the parties to this conflict met in Madrid on 30 October and launched direct bilateral negotiations aimed at achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

Those negotiations resumed in Washington on 4 December and are still under way at this time. Of the draft resolutions before us today neither even takes note of this important and unprecedented development. At the same time, these two resolutions, A/46/L.49 and A/46/L.51, fail to affirm the guiding principle of the Peace Conference: that it must be up to the Governments and peoples of the region to shape the future of the Middle East.

Although some particularly objectionable paragraphs have been removed, and we take note of delegations' efforts in that regard, the United States voted against draft resolution A/46/L.49 because the text makes no reference to the peace talks which are currently under way between the parties. It deals with many of the matters which are at present under consideration in the peace process and must be resolved through that peace process. Moreover, we consider that the language and tone remain unbalanced in its condemnation of one party to these negotiations.

(Mr. Wrampelmeier, United States)

As has been our practice in the past, the United States abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/46/L.51. We believe that the status of Jerusalem must be determined through negotiations among the parties concerned and as part of the comprehensive peace process.

Mr. GUVEN (Turkey) (interpretation from French): During the general debate Turkey explained its position on the situation in the Middle East and, in accordance with that position of principle, we voted in favour of draft resolutions A/46/L.49 and A/46/L.51.

We wish, however, to make certain comments on draft resolution A/46/L.49, which has just been adopted. In the first place, we noted with appreciation the considerable efforts of the sponsors of the draft resolution to clarify certain paragraphs which in the past had drawn criticism from delegations. However, the draft resolution makes no reference to the peace process initiated by the Madrid Conference and to the bilateral Washington negotiations. In our view, therefore, it is an incomplete text. Turkey attaches great importance to the success of the peace process and would have preferred having that important event duly reflected in the draft resolution.

Regarding paragraph 11 of the same draft, which refers to the relations between Israel and a third country, my delegation believes that the views expressed do not fall within the purview of the General Assembly.

Mr. AWAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The affirmative vote of the Syrian Arab Republic on draft resolution A/46/L.49 does not signify recognition of Israel which does not recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and continues to occupy the Syrian Arab Golan and other Arab territories in violation of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the norms of international law.

Mr. PODTSEROB (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): This year's discussions in the General Assembly of a range of questions concerning a settlement in the Middle East are taking place in a qualitatively new atmosphere, an atmosphere of growing hopes for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. That atmosphere arose from the persistent efforts of many countries, including the fruitful interaction between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the readiness of the parties directly involved in the conflict to sit down at the negotiating table.

A month ago, a negotiating process, which can and must be further developed, was launched in the capital of Spain, providing a unique opportunity to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and bring a long-awaited peace to that land, which has suffered so much. That hope has been strengthened by the emergence of the first practical steps, in particular the successful conclusion of the Madrid stage of the Peace Conference on the Middle East and the transition to bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Arabs.

At present the Soviet Union and the United States, as co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference, are continuing their interaction and partnership to advance efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive and just settlement in the Middle East. In those circumstances, we consider it extremely important to coordinate most carefully any actions at the national and international levels with the new realities which emerged on the day of the opening of the international Peace Conference in Madrid.

We believe that the General Assembly should at this session refrain from taking fixed positions on the substance of questions concerning a Middle East settlement and should wait to see what practical results the opening of the

(Mr. Podtserob, USSR)

peace process will yield. In that connection, we welcome the decision of Syria to defer a vote on draft resolution A/46/L.50.

Adoption at this session of the traditional set of resolutions on this issue, which contain numerous confrontational provisions, would not, we believe, be in keeping with the spirit of the times and in the interest of promoting the success of the negotiating process.

With that in mind, the Soviet Union, as co-Chairman of the Peace Conference, abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/46/L.49. Of course, such an approach does not represent any departure by the Soviet Union from its position of principle concerning the problems of the Middle East.

Mr. TAKHT-RAVANCHI (Islamic Republic of Iran): While voting in favour of the two draft resolutions adopted under agenda item 35, my delegation would like to express its reservations regarding those paragraphs of the draft resolutions which render recognition to the Zionist regime.

Mr. HAJNOCZI (Austria): Austria explained its position on the situation in the Middle East during the debate on this item. Our position is well known and has been consistent over the years. We share the basic concerns and agree with many, but not all, elements expressed in the draft resolutions before us. In particular, my delegation cannot support those elements which would not only aggravate the existing situation but also impede the search for peace.

Therefore Austria, while supporting draft resolution A/46/L.51, was compelled to abstain on A/46/L.49.

Ms. CANAS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): The Argentine Republic abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/46/L.49 because we are convinced that in the present circumstances the adoption of decisions by the General Assembly definitely does not contribute to creating the most appropriate context for the peace talks taking place between the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In that context, I should like to reaffirm at this point the importance my country attaches to the peace process that began in Madrid under the sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, providing a unique opportunity that undoubtedly reflects the aspiration for a future of peace and harmony between the two peoples.

At this time I wish to underscore and support the positive efforts made by the sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.49 to change their text in order to eliminate ideas and language not conducive to the objective of a just and definitive solution to this painful conflict. In that connection, we consider it imperative that our Organization should, through its decisions, keep pace with the positive changes taking place on the international scene. Only in that way will it be able to face the conflicts that still exist and those that may yet arise.

Mr. AMER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolutions A/46/L.49 and A/46/L.51 concerning the situation in the Middle East, which have just been adopted.

(Mr. Amer, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Nevertheless, my delegation would like to place on record its reservation regarding every paragraph in these resolutions that may imply, directly or indirectly, recognition of the Zionist entity in occupied Palestine.

Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The Mexican delegation's votes during the consideration of the item on the situation in the Middle East have always been motivated by a desire to support the principles and initiatives aimed at achieving an indivisible peace based on a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict afflicting that region.

We have invariably held that a settlement of the problems of the Middle East should have as a starting point strict implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In this context the Mexican Government has been following most carefully the development of events in the Middle East, and in particular the negotiating efforts under way now. In fact, the peace process that began on 30 October in Madrid is firmly supported by the Mexican Government.

My delegation views the texts submitted this year on the situation in the Middle East for consideration by the General Assembly as an important effort towards conciliation through the elimination of ideas and language alien to the spirit that should prevail in such a delicate and crucial stage of the negotiating process. We believe that this effort must continue, in conformity with the positive changes taking place in the peace process.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

Our votes on the draft resolutions contained in documents A/46/L.49 and A/46/L.51 are consistent with our unwavering support for the principles that should govern a negotiated solution. We agree that the provisions of international law and the various relevant decisions of the Security Council must be respected.

We also regard as a positive aspect of the peace process now under way the willingness of the parties to engage in dialogue and set aside prejudices and antagonisms that disregarded the political reality of the situation in the region. We are convinced that the quest for a negotiated solution based on the implementation of existing United Nations decisions and principles of international law will ensure the strengthening of peace and security: the fundamental aspiration of the peoples of the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 35.

TRIBUTE TO JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT: We have consecrated this hour for a solemn occasion in which our distinguished Secretary-General and I will have the chance to say a few words on the occasion of his imminent retirement from his important post.

My good friend Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, distinguished representatives: The hours and the days are passing so quickly, and soon, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, you will come to the end of 10 years of distinguished service as Secretary-General of the United Nations: 10 years full of events and rich in achievements, 10 years during which these events and achievements, and your great efforts, will be associated with your name. Here in New York, at the United Nations, you will be warmly remembered and fondly missed.

(The President)

At this hour I stand to pay a sincere tribute, on behalf of all the members of the General Assembly and on my own behalf, to a distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, soon to retire after having served the United Nations with great distinction, devotion and dedication over the past 10 years - to an eminent statesman who is leaving the Organization with a distinguished record of accomplishments that have greatly enhanced the prestige and the international authority of this world body. He has earned the full appreciation and admiration of the international community.

Over the past 10 years during which Mr. Perez de Cuellar has placed himself at the service of the United Nations, I and the entire membership of the Organization have been able to appreciate those qualities for which he has become so well known: dignity and generous leadership, wisdom and the courage of his convictions. His unfailing devotion to the purposes and principles of the United Nations has been one of the mainstays of our Organization in its struggle to endure, and indeed to succeed, in the face of the great challenges of our time. His role in making the image of the United Nations what it is today will long be remembered.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar, you have our best wishes for a rich and active new life as the elder statesman of the nations united. I have no doubt that the United Nations will continue to call on your unrivalled experience in the years to come. To you and to your family, may I on behalf the General Assembly extend our best wishes, adding the assurance that, whatever you may choose to do, all of us here at the United Nations will always remain your close friends, and the hope that we shall continue to benefit from your wise counsel and experience. Thank you very, very much.

(The President)

(spoke in Arabic)

It gives me great pleasure to call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, I thank you for your kind and generous words.

Two weeks ago, in this very Hall, I felt deeply touched by the spontaneous gestures of acclaim and the generous remarks about me made by the distinguished representatives of the different regional groups. For all of these let me express my profound gratitude.

This is not the occasion for me to dwell on the world situation or the state of our Organization. I have done so amply in recent months. As it is unfolding at present, the state of the world eludes all facile judgements. For many years the cold war was a reality which concealed a host of other realities that are far more ingrained in the human condition.

(The Secretary-General)

Now that these realities are visible, we cannot pretend that we did not notice the signs of them before, nor can we defend ourselves with old prejudices and assumptions. The traditional concepts which sustained the philosophies of hegemony or domination or spheres of influence, and which were by no means confined to any particular Power or group of Powers nor to any particular ideology, look increasingly flimsy. We are face to face with a new and varied generation of problems.

This in turn affects the evolution of our Organization. Review, reform and renewal which sometimes dictate a drastic overhaul are part of the life of any organization; they should be more so in the case of the United Nations which has to deal with unpredicted - and unpredictable - turns in international life. The Organization needs restructuring, no doubt, if it is to keep pace with the times. But the change that was obstructed by the cold war is not going to be the work of a single day. Nor can it be viewed as a purely managerial or administrative affair. Deeper questions will be involved in it. Some of these are of such a fundamental nature that they require thought of the same depth and scope as was devoted to the formulation of the mandates of the United Nations and the specialized agencies at the time of their establishment. I would venture to assert, with the conviction born of 20 years' association with the United Nations, that any structural reform of this Organization needs to be accompanied by a determination on the part of its Member States to support it, and to make use of its mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of the countless political, economic and social problems that are its daily round.

(The Secretary-General)

There is much talk at present about fitting the United Nations for the demands of the next century. This reflects a much-needed forward-looking approach. However, I am not sure if we yet have a precise idea about what shape those demands will take. Searching questions are being posed about the traditional notions of sovereignty. The expanding areas of common concern suggest new avenues of multilateral action. All these issues will be accentuated in the coming years. Every inspection of the anatomy of the Organization has to take that into account. The utmost care will need to be exercised lest the international life to which we aspire be organized on bases that will prove to be unstable. The Organization cannot be put into a mould from which it cannot extricate itself in order to answer the expectations of different groups of States, the affluent and the disadvantaged alike.

This caveat, however, does not cloud my vision of the future of the Organization. I have said before that the United Nations enters the post-cold-war era as an element of continuity, of constancy in the midst of flux. Continuity and constancy can be provided only by adherence to principles, and there is no agency in the world which can compete with the United Nations in developing agreed understandings of principles and ensuring their consistent application. It is, of course, fatuous to suppose that the era now unfolding will mean the end of power politics. One thing, however, is certain. The more power politics is detached from principles that are honestly stated and generally accepted, and the less it responds to the legitimate aspirations of people, the more evanescent and less constructive will be its accomplishments.

I envision the United Nations, therefore, as the central agency for upholding the rule of law, and thereby providing the necessary equilibrium and

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the necessary defence against anarchy. For this, it will need the faithful support of all Member States. It will need cohesive management, equipped with the necessary powers and resources, undistracted by pressures from outside and unthrottled by over-legislation. It will need to be rescued from the financial bankruptcy which dogs it at present and from uncertainty in the future. Besides the issues affecting peace and security, this is one of the issues of most concern to the Organization. Empty words will have to be discarded and replaced by programmes - programmes clearly set out, reliably financed and scrupulously carried out.

Recent developments in Europe have underlined the universal vision and applicability of the Charter of the United Nations - an overarching document that embraces all members of the human family and the nations into which they are joined. Beyond that it is worth recalling that the Charter was not cast in stone and is, therefore, an appropriate guide and instrument in times of great flux, such as the present. As I have had occasion to observe again recently, the work of the United Nations will remain the facilitation of peaceful and constructive change, not the perpetuation of the status quo. Indeed, no one should doubt that the United Nations can - indeed, must - play a role to the maximum of its potentiality in the process of change that will continue to affect each and every continent.

The United Nations will in particular need to address itself more seriously to the great divide in the world today, the divide between the rich nations and the poor. This, along with the universalization of the human rights regime, is a fundamental issue of the new age. It is a political issue because I see no separating wall between economic frustration and political discontent. When I ask myself the question as to what should dominate the

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concerns of the United Nations in the coming years, the answer comes easily: an agenda of justice. I feel that the United Nations will acquit itself before the bar of the human conscience when deprived societies and oppressed peoples can turn to it not out of futile hope but with the confidence of obtaining redress. Equally, it will vindicate the trust of other peoples and societies only if it succeeds in drawing up and implementing plans of action to solve global problems that are beyond the reach of Governments individually. This is the focus of my vision of the United Nations.

As I prepare to be relieved - indeed, liberated - from the burdens of my office, I feel enriched by the experience. I have enjoyed working with my senior colleagues in the Secretariat and I feel proud of the competence and integrity displayed by the entire staff of this House throughout my tenure. These have been years that have witnessed a great transformation of our Organization; they have been testing years. Not even once did the Secretariat fail to carry out with efficiency a mandate, however unforeseen, that was entrusted to it, nor did it ever hesitate to enter uncharted territory, and to improvise when that was necessary. That it cheerfully bore additional burdens and physical hardships, even in the face of denigration and criticism, is evidence of a spirit of internationalism and dedication which, I believe, is a priceless asset to the international community.

In the intergovernmental sphere, I have been blessed with happy collaboration with the leaders and representatives of States gathered here. Together, we have surmounted obstacles and been able to change the bleak atmosphere of doubt and listlessness that surrounded the United Nations at the time of my induction, and to create one of confidence and dynamism.

(The Secretary-General)

These experiences and memories will remain with me in the years to come. From this day on, I will make myself the preacher of a new faith based on peace and justice for all peoples, and this will by my way of continuing to serve the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: I sincerely thank the Assembly, and I share members' regard and affection for the Secretary-General. Again, I wish him good luck, happiness and success in his future endeavours.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.